



Name of Project: Caring for the Caregiver

Name of Organization: The Kennedy Center, Inc.
Trumbull, CT

Choices for Independence Principle: Empowerment/Access to Information/Community Living, Nursing Home Diversion

Description of Program:

During the 1950s and 1960s, many parents of developmental disabled children rejected institutional care for their children, insisting on a place for their children in society. They cared for their children at home and became advocates. These parents are now in their 60s, 70s and 80s and are still caring for their children.

The Caring for the Caregiver program was begun as a demonstration pilot project sponsored by the Kennedy Center, a private community-based rehabilitation organization in Trumbull. The program is an opportunity to assist developmental disabled adults with the confusing role reversals they may face as their parents age. The parents become physically unable to care for their children as well as their homes or themselves. The Caring for the Caregiver program works with 41 developmental disabled adults and their families. A caregiver facilitator works one-on-one with families to determine what skill the developmentally disabled adult child needs to learn in order to care for their elderly parent. The disabled adult is taught how to perform the task. The services provided to the families include:

- Case Management: Providing a needs assessment and developing a service plan with the family.
- Counseling: Focusing on the immediate concerns and needs of the caregiver and providing needed support, which may include problem solving or group support.
- Information and Referral: Depending on family needs, providing information about services and assistance in accessing the services.
- Functional Skill Development: Assisting the developmental disabled adult child caregiver in maximizing their caregiver skills within the home setting.
- Respite Planning: Increasing leisure time and activities for the caregiver.
- Monitoring and follow-up Services: Weekly services to support the caregiver and the family

The response from the families involved in the Caring for the Caregiver program has been overwhelming. Parents have willingly allowed their adult children to assume caregiving responsibilities. The adult children have a sense of purpose in their role as the caregiver of their parents. An example would be the training of a developmentally disabled adult son living with his 70-year-old father. The father has leg problems and managing stairs has become a problem for him. Their washer and dryer are in the basement. The son has learned to sort, wash, dry, fold and put away the laundry just the way Dad used to do it- an important task in allowing both to continue to live in their home.

The key elements that make this program work is the partnership between the Southwestern Agency on Aging and The Kennedy Center and the structure of the training component of the program which includes a caregiver facilitator who serves as a coach for the developmentally disabled adult.

The Kennedy Center's Caring for the Caregiver Program won a 2006 Silver Connecticut Quality Improvement Award Innovation Prize.

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